

**Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack Fishery  
Frequently Asked Questions  
June 2011**



**How is the fishery for the Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack currently managed?**

- **Recreational**
  - 1,368,000 million pound quota
    - Fishery closes when quota is met or projected to be met.
    - Quota is reduced in year following a quota overage to account for the overage.
  - 30-inch fork length minimum size limit, no maximum size limit.
  - Daily bag limit of one fish per person with a zero bag limit for the captain and crew of for-hire vessels.
  - June 1 to July 31 closed season.
- **Commercial**
  - 503,000 pound quota
    - Fishery closes when quota met or projected to be met.
    - Quota is reduced in year following a quota overage to account for the overage.
  - 36-inch fork length minimum size limit, no maximum size limit.
  - March 1-May 31 closed season.

**How does NOAA Fisheries Service determine the recreational and commercial greater amberjack quotas are met?**

- **Recreational**
  - Recreational greater amberjack landings are obtained from three data sources: Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey, including the For-hire Charter survey; Southeast Fisheries Science Center Headboat survey; and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department charter and private/rental angler creel survey.
  - In season recreational landings can also be viewed at:  
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/RecreationalLandingsandCatchLimits.html>.
- **Commercial**
  - Commercial greater amberjack landings are obtained from fish dealer landing reports, which are provided to NOAA Fisheries Service every 2-4 weeks.
  - In-season commercial landings for greater amberjack can be viewed at:  
[http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/quotas/grouper\\_tilefish/grouper\\_tilefish\\_landings.htm](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/quotas/grouper_tilefish/grouper_tilefish_landings.htm).

**When will the recreational sector for the Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack close in 2011?**

- The 2011 recreational greater amberjack quota of 1,368,000 pounds was reduced to 1,315,224 pounds as a result of the harvest overage in 2010.
- NOAA Fisheries Service does not project the reduced 2011 recreational quota of 1,315,224 pounds for greater amberjack will be met in 2011. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) implemented a recreational fishing season closure from June 1 through July 31 of each fishing year. This seasonal closure is anticipated to prevent the quota from being exceeded and allow fishing to remain open through the end of the year.
- NOAA Fisheries Service will monitor recreational landings in-season to determine if the quota is met. If the quota is projected to be met, recreational anglers will be notified as soon as possible regarding any adjustments to the fishing season.

**When will the commercial sector for the Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack close in 2011?**

- The 2011 commercial greater amberjack quota of 503,000 pounds was reduced to 313,900 pounds as a result of the harvest overage in 2010.
- The reduced 2011 commercial quota of 313,900 pounds for greater amberjack was closed on June 17, 2011.

**Why did the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) and NOAA Fisheries Service implement quotas for Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack?**

- Changes to federal law in 2007 required regional fishery management councils to develop annual catch limits (ACLs) for each of their managed fisheries at a level that prevents overfishing, including measures to ensure accountability.
- An ACL is the level of annual catch of a fish stock in pounds of fish, or numbers of fish, that if exceeded, triggers accountability measures such as a seasonal closure or quota closure. The greater amberjack quotas act as ACLs.

**What happens if the greater amberjack annual catch limit (quota) is exceeded?**

- When the commercial or recreational sector exceeds its quota in any given year, the amount of the quota overage is deducted from that sector's quota the following year.
- **Recreational**
  - In 2009, the recreational quota of 1,368,000 pounds was met and the recreational fishing season was closed on October 24, 2009. The 2009 recreational landings exceeded the quota by 124,816 pounds despite the closure of the recreational greater amberjack sector.
  - The 2010 recreational quota was set at 1,243,184 pounds. The 2010 recreational fishing season remained open through the fishing year and the adjusted quota was exceeded by 52,776 pounds.
  - The 2011 quota is set at 1,315,224 pounds to adjust for the 2010 overage. The 2011 quota is not projected to be exceeded with the implementation of the new annual June-July seasonal closure.

- **Commercial**

- In 2009, the commercial quota of 503,000 pounds was exceeded by 129,928 pounds despite the closure of the commercial greater amberjack sector on November 7, 2009. Thus, the 2010 commercial quota was set at 373,072 pounds.
- The 2010 quota was exceeded by 189,100 pounds despite the fishery being closed on October 28, 2010.
- The 2011 commercial quota is set at 313,900 pounds and is projected to be met on June 17, 2011. The season is closed for the remainder of the year and will re-open on January 1, 2012.

**What is the current status of the Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack population?**

- The 2010 Greater Amberjack Update Assessment was reviewed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) at their March 2011 meeting.
- The SSC has determined that the Overfishing Limit is 2.38 million pounds per year and recommended a total allowable catch of 1.78 million pounds per year.
- Greater amberjack are currently in year 9 of a 10-year rebuilding plan.

**What changes to greater amberjack management are pending?**

- The Gulf Council and NOAA Fisheries are developing Amendment 35 for implementation in 2012 to address changes to the greater amberjack rebuilding plan and adjust the total allowable catch.
- The recreational sector actions may include establishing a vessel limit, adjusting minimum size limit and adjusting the recreational fishing season closure.
- The commercial sector actions propose to implement a commercial trip limit of 2,000 or 3,000 pounds and adjust the commercial fishing season closure.

**When will the status of the Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack next be assessed?**

- The dates, times, and location for the next assessment have not yet been scheduled.